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SUBJECT: AMBIGUITY OVER RUSSIA,S FUTURE RELATIONS WITH
POLAND, BALTIC STATES

Classified By: Acting Deputy Chief of Mission Alice Wells for
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. During the past week's hostilities in Georgia, the Russian MFA harshly criticized the positions of Poland and the Baltics. Despite this criticism, the GOR has taken no action against these countries and some Polish and Baltic diplomats in Moscow do not believe that their relations with Russia will seriously erode following the conflict, although Estonian Embassy contacts tell us Russian nationalist youth groups plan protests at Baltic and Polish embassies in the days ahead. The first possible sign of Russia's discontent may come if Foreign Minister Lavrov cancels his upcoming trip to Poland. End summary.

¶2. (U) The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) sharply criticized Poland and Baltic countries for their strong pro-Georgian support and anti-Russian statements during the South Ossetia conflict, and threatened that relations could worsen in the future. On August 11, MFA Deputy Spokesman Boris Malakhov said that "statements by some countries, including the Baltic States and Poland, about the developments in South Ossetia and the role of Russia in these events are cynical, untimely and unclear. Such statements question the quality of relations between our countries and even the schedule of top-level contacts." On August 10, Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin also criticized the Poland/Baltics statement, saying that it "accused Russia of no less than pursuing an imperial revisionist policy." He said that the Polish and Baltic Presidents "found probably the most cynical and ill-timed forms to express such an odd and absolutely illogical approach," and argued that "it was precisely because of such signals that the developments in South Ossetia started on August 7."

¶3. (C) Despite this harsh criticism by the Russian MFA, diplomats in Moscow from Poland and the Baltic states have not received any formal demarches from the MFA. MFA Malakhov's allusion to possible changes in the schedule of "top-level contacts" could be referring to the upcoming September 10 visit of Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov to Poland. Polish First Secretary on bilateral affairs Wioletta Sokol confirmed August 13 that Poland still expected Lavrov to visit and would continue to cooperate with Russia unless the Russians decide to alter the terms of the relationship. Likewise, Lithuanian acting Charge D'Affaires Laurynas Jonusauskas said that he believed that Russian-Lithuanian cooperation would go forward normally, but will also depend on the reaction from the Russian side.

¶4. (C) On the other hand, Janis Zlamets, political counselor at the Latvian Embassy said that "the world has changed," and he stressed the need to understand why the Russians acted as they did. He said he believed decisions

would be made after "emotions settle down a bit," and was not aware of any current plans to drastically alter his country's relationship with Russia. The Estonian acting Deputy Chief of Mission Kari Label said that her mission has had minimal talks with the Russians since the start of hostilities, but she was informed that youth groups were planning 10 days of protests in front of the Estonian Embassy beginning on August 14. She said she believed that these will be relatively small protests and may also occur in front of the embassies of other Baltic countries and Poland.

15. (C) Comment. At this stage, it appears the GOR has not yet made a decision on exactly how it will react to the position of Poland and the Baltic states on the conflict in Georgia. The first indicator of any shift in Russian's relations with these countries may come if Foreign Minister Lavrov cancels his September 10 trip to Poland. End comment.
RUBIN